



# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● MAY 1993

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*A Village Church built by a local Congregation*



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*Opinions expressed by contributors do not commit the C.S.I.*

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*The Magazine of the Church of South India*

**MAY 1993**

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## 25 Years Ago!

The Department of the laity has been drawn by its work to consider not merely what the church ought to be doing, but what the church is. We have come to see that the whole church shares Christ's ministry in the world and that the effective exercise of this ministry must largely be by church members, when they are dispersed in the life of the world. As it was said in Evanston: 'The real battle of faith today are being fought in factories, shops, offices and farms, in political parties and government agencies, in countless homes, in the press, radio and television, in the relationship of nations: Very often it is said that the Church should, 'go into these spheres', but the fact is that the church is already in these spheres in the persons of its laity. There is nothing new in this connection—for our Lord said 'Ye are the salt of the earth...'—but it is a truth which has been obscured over many periods of the church's life.

—Churchman 1957

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# The Perfect Community



*'If we live by the truth and in Love ; We shall grow in all ways into Christ' (Eph. 4 : 15).*

There is an endless variety of community models, in the sense that people can live together and relate to one another in so many ways. Even strangers in a city bus are somehow a community as they exchange social voice in a shallow way. So too are people who live in a hostel or pettai when they acknowledge one another without much depth of concern. Any group of people who want to work at a common project like parish school or hospital could agree to live in the same building and be a community of a sort without much concern for one another. They could even agree to pray together without experiencing a deep sense of community before God. But the quality of community can be gauged by the level of communication among its members. Is their communication only a matter of social voice ? Is it just functional conversation about the common work which they have undertaken ? It might even be only deep enough to avoid interpersonal confrontation enabling them to live in a shallow harmony by avoiding one another's points of sensitivity.

In these models of community, the form of government or authority will either be a benign dictatorship or a democratic style where decisions are made from the counting of hands or group pressure.

The Christian model of life in community is quite another thing. It has two dimensions which other groupings and government-styles usually lack. They are love and trust. These lead to deeper levels of communication and a type of government different from the other models of community. Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians is the guideline : 'If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow in all ways into Christ' (Eph. 4: 15).

The members of the Christian community care about one another, share with and bear with one another, submit to one another and serve the kingdom of God in themselves and in the world. To those who lack faith, this model of living together is impossible and appears to be nonsense.

For Christians, however, it is real, because Jesus revealed it to us when he spoke of his life with his Father and the Holy Spirit and he prayed that we should live like them : 'Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you . . .' (Jn. 17 : 20-21).

The mind-boggling things that are happening in our country and in our neighbour countries surely will make us ponder over the importance of community living.

Let us contemplate in faith, just how they are 'one', by looking at the community life of God as the perfect model calling for our Christian response. It is so far above just living together, from merely making pleasant noises from simple common engagement on a project of work or from any form of mutual manipulation. Looking at the community of God and using human terms we will see three persons, who are truly 'one' in being a community which cares about, shares with, bears each other's burdens and submits to one another because of their love.

It becomes imperative on our part to express Christ's love for one another through trustful sharing and concerned listening. That love is within all of us and our very presence together at this level shows this despite possible failures and misunderstandings of the others. For some it may be a sincere desire to start again, to trust once more and to listen more deeply than before. For others it may be a deepening of trust already there. This leads us to care for others.

In the context of one's life, caring has a way of ordering his other values and activities around it. When this ordering is comprehensive, there is a basic stability in his life. He is 'in place' in the world, instead of being out of place, or merely drifting or endlessly seeking his place. Through caring for others, by serving them, a person lives the meaning of his or her own life.

The meaning of caring is not to be confused with such meanings as wishing well, comforting and maintaining or simply having an interest in what happens to another. Also,



It is not an isolated feeling or a momentary relationship, nor is it simply a matter of wanting to care for same person. Caring, and helping another grow and actualise himself, is a process, a way of relating to someone that involves development, in the same way that friendship can only emerge in time through mutual trust and a deepening and qualitative transformation of the relationship. Caring and love for one another is infinite; Jesus spoke of his Father's love: 'You loved me before the foundation of the world' (Jn. 17: 24). That is why Jesus claimed that the father and son know each other perfectly. Knowing means a knowledge of the heart which is love and which comes from a

trustful two way self-revelation. This is the first necessity for Christian community.

All true Christian Community is for service to the Church and to the world. God's outreaching love and holiness come to the world in Jesus and are visibly effective through the action of the Holy Spirit. The transforming experience of Christian community can begin in us if we allow the Holy Spirit to work in our life.

—DASS BABU

## Headstart for Tiny-Tots

DR. W. A. F. HOPFER,\* Madras

The church of South India Synod Council for Education is operating a project in 250 rural primary schools in South India under the title 'Comprehensive Rural Primary School Education Development (CORPED) Programme'. One hundred and fifty schools have been identified for establishing Community Education Centres (CECs). Animators (mostly women) have been selected from the local communities. They have been trained by the Education Council to organise and conduct the following education programmes in the rural community where the CSI Primary School is located: Tiny-Tots Education Programme; Parents (focusing on mothers) Education Programme; Family Education Programme; Supportive Education Programme for school goers; Education for drop outs/push outs/left outs.

Curriculum development workshops in tiny-tots education were held to produce teaching-learning materials in Tamil/Telugu/Malayalam/Kannada. The participants in the workshops consisted of Diocesan Women development workers and animators. The curriculum development was done adopting the following approaches:

- \* Let us come together to cut paper into bits
- \* Let us come together to paste bits of paper
- \* Let us come together to drive train, bus etc.

Four major curriculum themes were selected for developing materials utilising the above approaches in the local eco-contexts. These themes were selected to enable the development of human potential available in the children chosen from the deprived and disadvantaged communities. The themes are the following:

- (a) towards acquiring knowledge of the environment.
- (b) towards acquiring linguistic skills.
- (c) towards acquiring mathematical skills.
- (d) towards formation of desirable values.

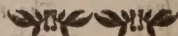
The major objective in organising rural tiny-tots education is to enable, encourage and empower children (ages 3 to 5) to enter the local primary school in standard 1 at the appropriate age with courage, confidence and competence.

The animator organises the tiny-tots education for about two hours. Generally it is done in the mornings. She works in close collaboration with the organiser appointed by the Government in the local balwadi. Both the facilitators live in the same village and therefore they work together for the wholistic development of their children. In a remote village, where there is no balwadi, the animator works alone among the children.

Out-of-class activities and in-class activities are organised by the animator for the tiny-tots using the immediate local specific environment.

- \* Let us come together to play
- \* Let us come together to sing
- \* Let us come together to dance
- \* Let us come together to act
- \* Let us come together to make things
- \* Let us come together to observe things
- \* Let us come together to hear stories
- \* Let us come together to tell stories
- \* Let us come together to print a variety of patterns
- \* Let us come together to paint pictures
- \* Let us come together to draw pictures

\* Courtesy: THE HINDU.





# Sharing of Life is Mission\*

BISHOP M. AZARIAH, Madras

In this second part of my Presidential address, I would like to explore together with you the meaning and implications of our theme for this Council, 'Sharing of Life is Mission'. Also, we need to discover the new strategies from the perspective of our theme for the diverse ministries in our Diocese. But in our efforts in the above directions, we cannot but focus on Christ our Living Lord whom God sent into this world to share the very life of God with all human kind and all creation. (John 1:14, 3:16, 10:10, 17:3, 20:31 and Revelation 21:5.) Thus the mission of Jesus Christ in this world was in fact to share the very life to God with all His creation both human and non-human. It is this great truth accepted over 2000 years of history which was celebrated by the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Vancouver in 1983 by choosing the theme 'Jesus Christ—The Life of the World.' 'In the life of Jesus we meet the very life of God face to face. He experienced our life, our birth and childhood, or tiredness, our laughter and tears. He shared food with the hungry, love with the rejected, healing with the sick, forgiveness with the penitent. He lived in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and at the end gave His life for others' (Mark 10:45). In the mystery of the Eucharist (Holy Communion) the risen Christ empowers and enables us the Christian followers to live this way of giving and receiving, a life of sharing in mission with all our neighbours and natural elements around us. However, only in the power of the Holy Spirit, indwelling in the heart of each believing Christian this way of life of sharing could be formed in us. (Acts 1:8; 1 Corin. 6:19, Romans 8:26). Such a transformation is costly and means the willingness to risk even death in our journey into the Kingdom of God. In Mark Chapter 1:12-15 we have in a capsule form the essence of Jesus's model and method, as He shared His life in mission. In that passage we find it is the Spirit of God that guides Him to go into the wilderness (desert) to face the temptations of Satan for forty days, at the very start of His active ministry for over three years. But just before going into the wilderness Jesus had learnt of the arrest of John the Baptist, the last of the Hebrew prophets who functioned under the Law of Moses of the *Old* dispensation 'For until John, was the Law of Moses; but since then the gospel of the Kingdom was being proclaimed', as Jesus would point out later on (St. Luke 16:16). Thus after going through forty days of spiritual struggle in the wilderness Jesus discovers God's *New* dispensation of love (in the place of the Law of Moses), in the new terms of 'Sharing of Life is Mission. It is this He called the Gospel of the Kingdom (reign) of God. This meant He straight away left the wilderness again under the influence of the

Spirit of God which was upon Him (Luke 4:18-21) and went among the multitudes and crowds of people in and around the lake of Galilee, to be in solidarity and suffering with them, thus sharing His life in mission. The Greek word for multitudes of ordinary people is *Ochlos* and this word occurs as many as 36 times in the whole Gospel of Mark. Whereas the world for the religious people (*Laos*) of God like the Priests and Pharisees occurs only some six times. There we can clearly see Jesus's priority as to what kind of people with whom he shares His life in mission. (Read also Matthew 25:40). Thus we have the model, the meaning and method of our own mission as Christian followers and members of the Church. In specific terms I would refer to 6 different aspects or areas of life in this world where our Lord Jesus shared His life and therefore all of us Christians should follow in His steps:

1. 'I am the *bread* of life' (John 6:48) declared our Saviour-God. Surely this must include sharing of his life through economic ministry in this world. Or should we say bread or food giving ministry to the hungry? Responsibility for providing food for sustenance of all living creatures is attributed to God the Creator in the Old Testament (for e.g. in the book of Job 38:11 and in the book of Psalms 147:9) affirming that the Lord God provides even to the crowds of the sky food at their times and feeds the hungry human beings (Psalm 146:7).

In the Sermon of the Mount, Jesus also affirms the same when he speaks about the birds of the air and their care of God and so when God came in human form as Jesus He shares His very life as the bread and food with people that are hungry. This is illustrated in the incidence of His feeding the 5000 or 4000 *ochlos* people we know in the Gospel.

My dear friends in the Diocese of Madras, what kind of food giving ministries that we can boast of engaged in, as individual Christians and families, as congregations and Pastorates and Institutions? There is much food for thought in this question and also motivation for action programmes as we seek to share our life in Mission within our own localities and communities in the coming years.

2. 'I am the *water* of life and he who comes and drinks from the living water shall never thirst again', asserted our Saviour-God (John 7:37,38). Among other things, here is a reference not merely supply of a cup of water for drink as Jesus mentioned in some other context, but also to the inner meaning of water as symbol for the human rights/which

\* This is the Second part of the Presidential address delivered by the Bishop at the recent Diocesan Council.



should be the concerns for our political ministry. Christians tend to shy away from engaging in politics of the Government of the Nation or State saying 'Politics is the last resort of the scoundrel'. But during the great world war when good Christians did nothing to stop the great destruction of lives of people in their millions, one Theologian asserted, 'it is the Christian who shun politics who is the real scoundrel'. Because it is duty and responsibility of every citizen, especially Christian citizens to defend and support the weak and the vulnerable in the society and the victims of exploitation and the oppressed and the poor among us.

My dear fellow Christians, what are the areas of political life in our country; should we enter in the service of the politically discriminated? Such as the minorities and the backward classes in India today. The coming two years and beyond we are certainly challenged to start new ministries to defend the defenceless and give voice to the voiceless and to empower the powerless against the powers and principalities of this world.

3. 'I am the *Way* of life' (John 14 : 6) insisted our Saviour-God. When Jesus told His disciples in the Upper Room on the first Maundy Thursday that he was going to the Father, one of them asked that Jesus should show the Father to them. At that time He said, 'I am the way to the Father', meaning He is the way for any human being to enter into the family of God, the Father of us all. This in fact was the central purpose of Jesus' Mission. That is to introduce the unknown and unseen God as being available to every believer as intimately as a human father, so close in love and family relationship. The Risen Christ, appearing to Mary Magdalene, described God as His own Father as well as the father of all His disciples (John 20 : 17), and the same truth is affirmed in John 1 : 12 'to those who have yielded Him (Jesus) their allegiance, He gave the right to become children of God.' Such is the status and recognition that Jesus came to give to every human-being who is a believer. Thus, through Jesus every believer can secure the glorious status of being a son or daughter of our God the Father. What a marvellous *social standing* that Christianity brought to millions of the 'Wretched of the Earth', the untouchables and slaves of every society in the world over these 2000 years. Indeed, after Jesus who taught us to call God 'Our Father' (Luke 11 : 4), nobody is a nobody, but everybody is a somebody with human dignity and social identity. Thus, by sharing of His life in Mission, Jesus had launched a new kind of social ministry that all Christians and the Churches must engage in.

My Friends, what a great social responsibility our Lord and Master has given to each of us! May God the Holy spirit energise everyone in our Diocese to fulfil our tasks of social ministry in the coming years.

4. 'I am the *Light* of the world' (John 1 : 9, 12) proclaimed our Saviour-God. Enlightenment of every human born in this world is the goal and purpose of all religions and of every spiritual pursuit in the world. This is true of the way of Buddhism and also of Hindu religion that longed for leading from darkness into light and from comparing it to the 'leading from death to life'. According to John,

His beloved disciple, Jesus claimed for Himself truly central role for every human pursuit for inner spirituality. If we as Christians believe in the truth of the Gospel, how can we neglect our own personal pursuit of new spirituality relevant for our own times and generation? Nor can we neglect our congregations, Pastorates or Church Institutions taking suitable initiative in our search for new spirituality under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. What are the specific ways in this direction which need to be discovered as individuals and congregations and fellowship groups in our own situation. But certainly the new initiatives for new spirituality as Christians will have to avoid the pitfalls of the traditional bhakti in the Christian community that is dominated by Hindu religious values and practises, such as belief in Karma and Vithi or caste observances and discrimination and cutthroat hypocrisies. It is not realised by most Christian bhaktas in our Churches that the idea of treating fellow human beings as equals is totally alien to the hierarchical systems and religions in our land of India. Whereas the Christian ethos with a belief that God is the Father, head of the family, equality and mutuality are sacred values that most characterise our bhakti and spirituality.

5. Jesus said, 'I am the *True Vine* of life' of the world (John 15 : 1). In the same vein Jesus described God His Father as the gardener. He reminds us that the Creator God of this beautiful world of trees and grass, fruits and flowers in their infinite variety of greens and other rainbow colours is also the great tenderer, protector and sustainer of this great garden of the Universe. This God our Father so deeply cares for all His creation, both human and non-human. He is the healer of all sicknesses and diseases of the human beings. But also works for restoring wholeness in the midst of brokenness and destruction of nature by wanton acts of human-beings. In other words, God the Father of Jesus and of the believers truly cares for the physical and the environmental healing and wholeness of the Universe. And when Jesus affirms, saying, 'I am the True Vine' undoubtedly He must be referring to his task and role in the restoration of the physical and environmental life of the world.

Of the concerns of Earth summit in Rio in Brazil last year, should be taken as the concerns of our Saviour God. Thus, as followers of Christ should we not also include the care and renewal of our physical environment in the agenda of Mission of sharing of life? In the coming years, as individuals and as congregations most certainly we should engage in actions for promoting health for all and for Ecological balance of all the Nature around us.

6. 'I am the *Truth* of Life', declared our Saviour-God in John 14 : 6 and also asserted that when human beings 'shall know the truth and the truth shall make them free' (John 8 : 32). Voltaire has said 'Man is born free but found everywhere in chains'. He was speaking of the human reality in his own country and generation some 300 years ago. But such was the condition about 3000 years earlier to him in the life of Moses and his fellow Israelites trapped in the bondage in the land of Egypt. And now my dear friends, some 300 years after Voltaire, the world does not seem to have changed much. Human communities of religious



and linguistic minority groups as well as several 1000 most backward tribal groups called indigenous people around the world still found to be in chains and bondages and slaveries of all kinds and that, most shamefully, in the hands of their own fellow human beings created by the same one God the Father of us all.

Coming nearer home in our own country we have the under-class of the Indian society described as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes listed in our National Constitution as recognised socially and educationally oppressed classes. These sections of people today prefer to call themselves as Dalits, i.e. the oppressed peoples. These sections of citizens however remain segregated and separated and divided even at the level of the village, the basic unit of our Nation. Any authentic effort for unity and integration of our mother land should first work for reconciliation between the traditionally divided Jathi people and the Adhi people in the same village. This must happen in all the 6 lakhs villages of our country. But what are the initiatives that our Church is taking towards the ministry of reconciliation (II Cor. 5 : 19) that our Saviour-God has given to us all.

The year 1993 is designated by the United Nations Organisation as the *Year of the Indigenous Peoples*. To pick-up this concern and project the same for all the world to see, was made possible by the Chris-

tian Mission of the World Council of Churches during its 7th Assembly meeting in Canberra in Australia in February 1991. The WCC statement from that Assembly declared 'The WCC should continue to work with indigenous peoples to ensure that issued identified by them, their communities and Organisations, will be heard and acted upon. We affirm the growing consciousness of Indigenous people's for freedom including those of the Dalits of India.'

My friends, whether we like it or not, the Indian Church is being challenged to take up the task of liberation of the oppressed communities as part of our *Sharing of Life in Mission*. With the coming years, can individual Christians and Congregations and Parishes in our Diocese come forward to take the risks in formulating and acting upon liberation ministries among our own neighbours and victimised sisters and brothers in our society?

### Conclusion

In conclusion, I can only hope and pray that everyone of my sisters and brothers assembled at this Council and all the people of God in our great Diocese of Madras will be challenged to act in some small way or the other at the earliest opportunity and join with fellow Christians in 'Sharing of Life in Mission' of Jesus our Lord, to the glory of the True God.



# Pentecost Message from the W.C.C.

*This is the text of the 1993 Pentecost message from the presidents of the World Council of Churches. Pentecost is celebrated this year on 30 May or 6 June. In an 18 March letter to WCC member churches, WCC General Secretary Konard Raiser suggested that the text of this year's message could be used in a service of rededication marking the midpoint of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998).*

*The presidents of the WCC were elected at the Seventh Assembly in Canberra (1991). They are Anna Marie Aagaard (Denmark), Vinton Anderson (USA), Leslie Boseto (Solomon Islands), Priyanka Mendis (Sri Lanka), Parthenios of Alexandria (Egypt), Eunice Santana (Puerto Rico), Shenouda of Alexandria (Egypt) and Aaron Tolen (Cameroon).*

Although the cold war has ended, our Message for Pentecost this year comes to you in a world full of menace. Our world is still broken and divided. The poor and the weak are still exploited and oppressed. Ethnic, religious, linguistic, racial and social divisions are being fuelled by an uncertain economic situation.

Yet it is in this world that we celebrate the breaking in of the Holy Spirit on this day of Pentecost. Pentecost reminds us first of all that God keeps promises. Jesus had promised: 'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you' (Jn. 14:18 NRSV). In a hostile world, the Comforter is with us.

But the Spirit came down on a gathered community living together in unity—a community of sharing and mutual understanding, welded together by study of the Word and by prayer. If this condition had to be fulfilled before the Holy Spirit could descend on us, in our local church, our country, our ecumenical movement, would we be worthy to receive the gift?

When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the first Christian community the Spirit broke down all the barriers—barriers of language, of nationality, of tribe, sex, race and social class. In July this year, young people from all over the globe will dare to gather under the banner of LIFE, in our world facing death and destruction. 1993 marks the mid-point of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women.

It is also the year of the World Conference on Faith and Order, with a theme focusing on *koinonia*. With the explosion of ethno-centric feelings and the resurgence of racial discrimination and religious intolerance in almost all our countries, we who are a community created through the work of the Holy Spirit must continue to affirm more strongly than ever, that the marks of a community willed by God are union, mutual understanding and sharing.

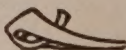
To counter fatalistic acceptance of division and exclusion, we are called to seek a 'communion' which is first of all spiritual, but which also involves sharing between brothers and sisters within a church or a nation as well as between churches and nations.

With the boldness of Paul, we have to reject the isolationism and arrogance of the rich and powerful and preach the hope founded on the faithfulness of God whose plan is that the world should be one.

If we are to be credible, we have to practice what we preach. 'Breaking bread and praying together' was a central element in the daily life of the church which received the Holy Spirit. Is it a reality among us? Can we hope, in our communities and among the different confessions, to see practical steps towards the breaking of the bread in common which, with baptism, makes us what we are?

Can we as the church demonstrate our solidarity with women through action that will eradicate all sexist attitudes among us? Can we be challenged by our young people as they strive to gather the forces of life, and bring about a new community?

The world today needs men and women of courage to affirm hope in face of defeatism, compassion in face of hatred, unity in face of division, sharing and solidarity in face of exclusion and exploitation. Pentecost reminds us that the One who steadfastly keeps promises is there. Let us pray that God will continue to pour out on us the gift of the Holy Spirit and that, with his help, we may in a true sense become builders of unity, ambassadors of peace, advocates of justice and witnesses to his power. May each day that God sends be Pentecost for us. [EPS]





# A Healthy Community

REV. D. JESUSAGAYAM, M.A., B.D., M.TH., M.PHIL., *Madurai*

'What is a healthy community', has been one of the most widely debated social issues for the last few years. Planners of society, Sociologists, Economists, health workers, environmentalists and Activists have many times tried to point out to the near break down situations of an unhealthy society and also they try to define the meaning of a real healthy community by means of many dimensions.

Beyond doubt, and unquestionably we acknowledge that the present breathing Society is certainly not a healthy community. When we agree to this, the challenge before us is to construct a meaningful and a healthy society. Hence I try to concentrate and focus three Visions which can bring out or construct a new healthy community.

- (1) A Vision of cleanliness
- (2) A Vision about environment
- (3) A Vision for a just society.

## I. A Vision of cleanliness :

Cleanliness is the most important feature for a healthy society. The question is why this cleanliness is not practiced or the need is not accepted among rural and urban masses. In more clear terms, lack of exposure of our masses to cleaner surroundings, ignorance about health hazards and insensitivity to the aesthetics of clean surrounding are at the base of such a situation. In the present population, 85% of the people are living in Villages. Can the Gospel of cleanliness be taken to these masses. Only when the message of cleanliness is exposed or the education given to these masses will create a possibility for a healthy society. Then it appears to be an unsurmountable challenge. When we set a vision and concentrate on the vision the challenges are shaping up the vision. These challenges are also enlightening our actions to shape up the Vision of a healthy society. Cleanliness is next to godliness; cleanliness is also an expression of our Spirituality.

## II. A Vision about environment :

Air, water, land and other creations on the land constitute our environment. We breathe, drink and eat of this environment. It is the environment which enables us to live. It has the secret spirituality of interdependency. One can always depend on the other and live. Humanity certainly and endlessly depend on the environment factors. The human beings are made as the crown of the whole environment. The uncontrolled use of technology in modern industry, transport and general living using fossil fuels of coal and oil, emit several

toxic gases into the atmosphere. Some of them are oxides of carbon, oxides of nitrogen, oxides of sulphur and compounds containing heavy metals like lead, mercury, arsenic etc. Certainly the modern technologies and modern industries have polluted the clean air.

Nearly three fourth of the earth's surface is covered by water. The world's water resources seen enormous when we use water for our daily activities, we do not cause to think that we are using a very precious resource. The survival of any living form would become impossible in the absence of water.

Of all the environmental resources, water is severely threatened by pollution. The water bodies like lakes and rivers are polluted with industrial waste and human waste. The main source of river pollution are urban liquid waste and industrial effluents. All the major cities in India discharge wastes into waterways. A report states that fourteen major rivers in India carry 85% of the surface run off and the drainage basins cover 73% of the country which has resulted in severe pollution of almost all the major rivers in India. The world health organisation studies have revealed that water-related diseases claim ten million lives a year, besides millions being affected by other diseases. Water prone diseases account for more than half the hospital beds in the world.

Land occupies a very small and minute space when you compare with other planets. Its diameter is 12,714 km and the outer surface of the land is mentioned as 8 km to 40 km thickness. This land is the home for the inhabitants of the earth. Now, our home is sick and unhealthiness is existing everywhere in our home. The chain of ecological interdependency has broken here and there. The spirituality of dependency has failed in our home. We live in a sickly home. Indiscipline, lawlessness, competition etc. are the qualities maintaining in our home. Our home is environmentally polluted, culturally polluted, economically polluted and socially polluted.

When we get up from our beds, as we place our feet on the earth, the touch begins between man and earth. This touch is an expression of our spirituality which manifests the secret love of interdependency. This touch also reminds the human history. Man was made from the earth. Humanity and the soil have greater adhesion. 'Adama' is the Hebrew word used for 'land' in the Holy Bible. This word Adama has a very close relation with the word Adam. Since man was created from 'Adama' he is named as Adam. The Hebrew word 'dam' means fertile or red soil. Man was made from the fertile soil and so he was called Adam. But the



crown of creations—'Man'—has failed to protect the soil. We must always acknowledge the truth that if we take care of the earth then the earth will take care of us.

To care the environment it is our duty and mission to create an awareness among our people. This awareness or the consciousness must be developed and promoted in all segments of the population. It is also well recognised that such a consciousness of 'ethic' has to be developed in children as they are the future citizens of our country.

### III. A Vision for a dust society

Every individual and also the whole society has to satisfy certain physical and psychological needs or wants for example food, clothing shelter environment, medicines, ceremonies, etc. In the process of producing and circulating the material goods that answer these needs man relates himself with nature through some technological tools called 'instruments of labour. They also relate to one another and form certain' relations. Every society thus posses an economic Organization or System.

A citizen is conscious or not and whether he likes it or not; politics constitutes an inescapable dimension of human existence. It plays an ever greater role in the day-to-day life. The very survival of mankind is now in the process of being determined by Politics and Politicians.

In every society, there is a social system or set up of interactions between social actors. This concept implies a certain distribution of social prestige and status. This also can be defined as the Differential Ranking of human individuals and their treatment as Superior and Inferior in certain socially important respects. These values have two functionary systems in the society castes and classes. From the beginning of the world, all systems especially the economic, political and social system have been organised on a pattern of inequalities. Where there is inequality there functions an Unjust Society. A society of inequalities and a society of injustices will never give birth to a healthy society.

Jesus Christ initiates the new society of Equals in his fellowship meals with outcastes; in his association with and equal treatment of women and men; and Jews and Samaritans; and in his demand that the rich who would be disciples should go sell everything, give to the poor and come and follow. He pointed to accumulated wealth or mammon as the one enemy of God. His own commandment is that we love one another. Love is the architect of equality and community. Hierarchical power and authority which lords it over others are clearly

rejected in favour of Service and Equality. Thus in memory of Jesus and under pressure of spirit, early christians pooled the resources and redistributed wealth to meet the needs of all and to ensure that nobody in the community was left in the lurch. This vision and practice of early church was buried gradually. Then in the last century, came the challenge of Marx and Socialism. The churches firmly set by them within the economic and cultural framework of capitalism, reacted negatively and so also the society.

A Vision of cleanliness, A vision of environmental awareness and a vision of just society will bring out a healthy Community. These three visions are directly or indirectly connected with most of the religions, especially with christianity. God created man to protect his creations; God gave many laws in the Old Testament to the people of Israel to protect cleanliness and also Christ's attempt to bring out a just society was well discussed with the above facts. As followers of Christ and committed people for His Mission, let us join in the Mission of Christ or in His ongoing Movement in the history to bring out a healthy community. The pattern of new community or healthy community is manifested in the book of Isaiah. Chapter 65 Verses 17 to 25.

'I create new heaven and new earth.'

'No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days.'

'No more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress.'

'An old man who does not fill out his days.'

'The sinner a hundred years old shall be accused.'

'They shall build houses and inhabit them.'

'They shall plant Vineyards and eat their fruit.'

'The wolf and lamb shall feed together.'

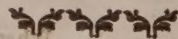
'The lion eats straw like Ox.'

'The dust shall be Serpent's food.'

'They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain.'

This was the Vision of Isaiah which has profound values about a 'Healthy Community'.

A challenge is placed before us to bring this vision into action.





# Rural Christianity in China

Most protestant Christians in China live in the countryside plateau in Central Joynan, the fertile valleys of coastal Zhezang the mountains of impoverished Abhui and newly prosperous Fujian.

Among the fastest growing churches in the world they also face the plethora of problems and the Fifth National Council of Chinese Christians Conference (January '92) put the church work in the countryside at the top of the agenda.

Personnel trained to lead churches and teach new believers the basics of faith are in short supply. Divisions heresies, and in fighting are all too common. Local religious affairs officials may be ignorant of or hostile to Christianity.

In July issue of the China Christian Council's monthly magazine 'Tian Fega' young graduates of Nanjing Seminary described the church in the village of Ziyang in rural Fujian province as a model for others.

## The Coming of the Gospel

The only road to Xyang is a winding gravel path leading up into the mountain above Luayean Sound: Public transportation to the village is by hand tractors. Trailers tightly packed with standing passengers bounce up and down to the rhythm of the potholes.

To a European eye this is beautiful countryside. Small terraced fields form contour lines on mountainsides topped by rocky outcrops. In little villages lovely wood and mudhouses sit amid bamboo grooves. Women in colourful headgear of the Shei nationality dry grain in the countryside.

But the local people terraced fields mean back-breaking work for even a small yield of grain and the rough terrain forces Luoyan Countys two itinerant evangelists to walk narrow mountain paths to many of the villages where Christian communities are located.

Across the pass is Xiyang a somewhat larger village inhabited by Han Chinese. So isolated is this community that local people could not recall ever having seen a foreigner even in the years before the revolution.

Nestled into a wide valley, surrounded by fields and orchards are traditional wooden houses, a new church stands prominently on a little knoll.

In this remote village where not a single Christian was found before 1978, there is a growing Chinese congregation. The young evangelist accompanying me told the amazing story of how the gospel came to Xiyang. ]

In the mid-1970s a young woman from Xiyang was sold into marriage, a practice common in many poor

areas of the Chinese countryside, to a place some hours away. But as she was on her way to her new inlaws her perspective suddenly died. Normally in such a case the man's relatives would blame the bride-to-be for bringing bad luck. Not so this family which happened to be Christian. They took her in with such loving care that she herself soon became a Christian.

With the evangelistic fervour typical of Chinese Christians, she decided to return home to spread the gospel. For the first several years few villagers were interested. Only a few old women became Christians.

Then one day a young boy fell into the village pond. By the time he was pulled out he was unconscious. Medical care was too far away even to consider.

Although the parents gave up hope the group of Christian women stayed with the boy and prayed for him throughout the entire day and night. On the morning of the second day he woke up. His recovery opened the doors to the gospel of Xiyang. Many people became interested in the Christian faith and 43 of the 200 odd families in Xiyang now belong to the Church.

Long Muhue and her husband Deng Qingjan are the leaders of the congregation. The young peasant woman with the big smile preaches every sunday. Where did she learn to do that? 'Oh, I don't have much education,' she answers, I am just a simple woman. But I did go to a training course for lay church leaders in the country town for a couple of weeks.' She acknowledges. In some respects the Church in Xiyang is typical of rural churches in China.

Throughout the countryside congregations are growing because the sick have experienced healing. The leaders of many of these churches like Long Muhua have had only minimal training.

In many other ways however the church in Xiyang are a very closely knit community. They have established a visitation Committee that keeps in regular contact with all Christians especially those in the surrounding villages.

We have many new Christians here, Deng Qingjain explains, and almost all are young people. They are not yet very firm in their faith so they need help and guidance.

The visitation committee also makes sure that anybody who falls ill gets visited, Long Muhua reports that faith healings are frequent.

Nobody in Xiyang has a television. Instead the Christians meet for church related activities almost every night—choir, Bible study, prayer meetings, committees. Sunday services are long. 'If I preach less than two



hours', an evangelist told me, 'they urge me to go on for another hour at least. They can never hear enough.'

In 1989 they started a Know-how Committee. Seven Young Christian peasants were sent to the country town to learn how to grow oranges and mushrooms. Now they pass their knowledge on to any interested villager, Christian or not.

The results are impressive. Orange trees in the grooves around the village are weighed down by ripening fruit. Mushroom growers proudly show their produce some of them bigger than the palm of a hand.

Average income has increased and signs of prosperity are seen all over the village. On the walls of Long Muhuas kitchen pictures of the New York and San Francisco skylines symbolise dreams for a better future.

Helping peasants to get rich is nothing out of the ordinary in a province of the ordinary but committed to reform. But forming a co-operative when everyone else is turning to individual production is a thought provoking step. Deng Qingjian who is in charge of the co-operative notes that villagers approve the fact that

we Christians are so united mutual help wasn't common here before we started it.

We also get very positive feed back from party cadres, adds Long Muhua. Before there were Christians in this village it was really a poor and hopeless place. There were lots of fights and some people even turned to crime because they didn't know how else to make a living. Now the church has given the whole village a new perspective on how to overcome poverty

The country government appreciates this the Joynan County Religious Affairs Bureau has a rule that new churches may be built only in places that originally had one. Since Xiyang had no Christians it had no church and the nearly 200 Christians met for a long time in a barn of long Muhau and Deng Qingjian. But when the Local cadres saw the influence of the Christians had they made an exception and granted some land on which to build a church.

Looking out from the church, the village is framed by the caption above its door 'Peace to those who go out' In Xiyang this is much more than a pious phrase.

—E.P.S.

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## Bible to go on despite extremism

**NFW DELHI—May 4:** After last Saturday's hijacking of an Indian Airlines aircraft, suspected to have been executed by a Kashmiri separatist, the government is more determined than ever to persist with the telecast of the teleserial. *Bible ki Kahaniyan*.

Fundamentalist Kashmiri militants have been protesting vociferously against the serial and want it sniped on the ground that it offends the religious sentiments of Muslims.

But the Union home ministry has instructed the ministry of information and broadcasting to beam the 39-part serial without interruption.

Succumbing to their demand would neutralise the efforts of the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir who claim to be pressuring the militants in their attempt to create an atmosphere conducive to elections in that state, the ministry feels.

Officials in the ministry argue that no religious or social organisations in Kashmir have raised protests against the

serial. The only resistance is from pro-Pakistan Islamic militant organisations.

The mega serial has been dogged by problems from its inception. In February, telecast was delayed by a few weeks as its producer, Apachan, was unable to keep to the shooting schedule.

Last week, the situation in the Valley took an ugly turn with militant groups forcing government employees to strike work.

Their aim was to force the Doordarshan Kendra in Srinagar to pull the serial off the airwaves.

With employees of the kendra too on strike, DD bosses in New Delhi were in a bind. The staff claimed to have been issued threats by the militants.

But Mandi House decided the best alternative was to increase security cover for the DD staff, hoping this ill be the closing chapter of this *Bible ki Kahani*.

—D. C. May 5





# Identity of Pastor's Wife

MRS. SUSAN THOMAS, Bangalore

There is a group of women to whom people have accorded with superficial respect but at the time suppressed them from expressing themselves. They are counted as persons worthy of respect but at the same time greeted with the stock answer 'you have no business'. Respected but voiceless, elevated but counted as nobody. What a frustration and disappointment! What a dilemma they face! They are none other than the ministers' wives.

We do live in a rapidly changing society. The pattern of ministry is also subject to such a change and be adopted according to the need of the hour. But the role model of the pastor's wife of 15th century is what is expected of still. The expectations of pastors wife are many, varied and often conflicting. The role model carved over the years made them to be meek submissive and voiceless person. They just become a faceless person, an appendage to her husband. But today women are aware about their rights and affected by the world-wide movements in church and society. Though the people expect her to be an imageless person, she is all the more aware about her 'self-image', that God created her in His likeness. She is no longer willing to confine her talents to the four walls. Some pastor's wives feel that they have the same abilities as men do and these abilities should not be hidden under a bushel. 'We expect them to be something, but nothing that overshadows their husbands...' This is what Ellen Goodman speaks of president's wife in his book 'What's with the Nancy-bossing'. This is a very apt portrait of pastor's wife too. The congregation only expect them to fulfil the supposed role model of a pastor's wife. This role expectation is the challenge and at the sametime is the problem of a pastor's wife.

## Role-Models expected of Pastor's wife

The role of minister's wife is a difficult one. Many have advised her what to do and how to do but no one seems to have taken the time to know as how she feels about such prescribed role. Since there is no Biblical reference, there is nothing she can relay upon. Generally people have high expectations of a pastor's wife. In their sight she must be wise, strong, submissive, obedient, female, talented, hospitable, one who visits homes, leads high moral life, modest in dressing and appearance and spiritual'. Who can fulfil such a standard of perfection? The minister's wife has been confused and bewildered in the performance of her role.

A historical survey of pastor's wife will bring out some ideas. The patterns set by the first minister's wives, Katherine Luther and Idelette Calvin, were followed

by many. This type of pastor's wife were 'obedient subservient companions', to their husbands. They had no public involvement and their service did not go beyond the domestic horizon. In the background they established warm environment suitable to ministry. Her reward would lie in the knowledge that she had served her husband instead of seeking direct satisfaction from her work.

The sacrificer model clasped her hands in pious resignation, expected little from her husband, financially or motionally, and hindered him not in his work by staying out of his way and looking after the family on her own, she should give up her dreams and submerge her needs and desires to his calling. Even today some pastors' wives are willing to play the sacrificer's role, but left to themselves they will not opt for it. Many of the pastors believe that their wives have no right to demand their time, since they have dedicated their whole life for a cause. Thus she becomes an appendage to his ministry.

The assistant type of clergy wife, becomes her husbands right arm; sharing many pastoral responsibilities and functioning as an extension of his ministry. She is busily engaged in all kinds of church activities, teaching, speaking, visiting and counseling.

It was this combination of companionship, sacrificer and assistance defined in private, not public terms that came to characterize the protestant parsonage. Mary Bouma, a pastor's wife says that 'at one time ministry couples were hired as two for the price of one'. There is an agenda for the ministers wife even when they do not acknowledge it.

Most of ministers' wives have experienced the tension of adjusting to their role. They face a lot of problems. Some of them are listed below.

- (i) lack of recognition
- (ii) lack of self-expression
- (iii) lack of family time
- (iv) lack of finance
- (v) lack of ability to cope up with expectations
- (vi) lack of co-operation from the other members
- (vii) lack of proper housing
- (viii) lack of fellowship.

Unless a congenial atmosphere is created for the pastor's wife to play her role, it is difficult to keep up the identity.



# For the Development of Leadership in the Churches

REV. B. D. PRASADA RAO, *Vajrakarur*

## (2) *Classification of Ministerial forms ;*

The above 6 forms along with few more new forms are categorised according to the nature and salient features of each forms as follows :

### A. Free Style (Independent) :

- (1) Independent preachers holding of congregations of their own.
- (2) Opendoor—pilgrim contingent.
- (3) Revivalist having their charismatic groups in various places.
- (4) Bhakti groups of mystic experiences.
- (5) Ecumenicals fellowship groups.
- (6) Associations of Retired pastors and lay preachers (a missionary field like Gangashalli, Hyderabad).

### B. Socio-religious Concern :

- (7) Fourfold Ministry.
- (8) Satsangh.
- (9) Caste churches.
- (10) 'Five point programme' (Gossnes-Veancelical culture church<sup>18</sup>).
- (11) Ecological prophets, preachers, priests and pastors.<sup>14</sup>

### C. Pedagogical (Methodical)

- (12) Touring pastors with cultural forms.
- (13) Christian Homes for human relations.
- (14) Ashram approach.
- (15) Churches in club culture.
- (16) Electronic Churches.

### D. Action Oriented (Revolutionary) :

- (17) 'Basic Educational Communities.'
- (18) 'Democracy of God.'
- (19) Action group christianity.
- (20) Liberation movement.

## III. DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

In the context of emerging new forms for pastoral ministry the kind of leadership development is obviously determined by the existing form of ministry in the church. Yet the leadership is not entirely different from that of

one form to the other. There remain certain elements common to leadership in all forms of ministry like organising, administering, caring, catering, etc. These elements are the component factors in selecting or electing the leaders.

Most of the above forms demand the leader to be an agent of churches mission to the world around. Such leadership seems to be the required quality of every believer St. Paul's statement or 'Priesthood of all believers' corroborates this fact. In every form of ministry every believer is a priestly mediator between God and the world around him. Thus, to be a Christian in any form means to be a sanctified leader in the society.

However the changing socio-cultural situation demands the leader to be creative enough to discern the mode of action not only by himself but also by his group, within and without the church relevant to the form of ministry to which he/she belongs. Specially in the forms like Fourfold Ministry or Diaconal ministry leadership seems to be a message to be passed on one after the other making the whole group a community of leadership to be disposed into the world to live and lead others to live the life of living for others. This leadership becomes a shared fellowship in God's mission for mutual education and spread of the kingdom values. Teilhard De Chardin rightly says that in the general rhythm of Christian life development and renunciation attachment and detachment are not mutually exclusive because, develop yourself, christianity says to Christians and if you possess something Christ says in the Gospel, leave it and follow me.<sup>17</sup> What else can a leader leave, if not it is his own craziness for power without being able to discharging his responsibilities.

The ministerial forms are dynamic in nature as long as the Cross which is the form of Christ is the hidden agenda of ministerial strategies. Any person as leader will never be indispensable for the ministry but leadership as a spirit is ever extant in whatever the form it may be.

In these new developments of religious trends, the theological colleges must be able to provide and effective leadership paradigm to the church in the form of an inbuilt mechanism of the student. Thus the college and the church are not two different compartments, but they are part and parcel of each other. A couple of visible features of this oneness may be suggested here.

- (a) A Cell in the college with students and teacher to diagnose and prescribe for the typical issues that are referred periodically by the already trained pastors in the church.



- (a) Churches must be the ever open laboratories for theological students to experiment with as many socio-religious problems as possible in a programmed guidance in terms of case studies and cologuness.
- (c) Training for a ' New breed of leadership '.

## TRAINING FOR THE NEW BREED OF LEADERSHIP

Newness of the leadership in this proposal may be explained in terms of practice rather than perspective. This is something hostile to the self interested, and crazy political scenario of the present church wherein people are acculturated to run a kind of fast race of seemingly to grab everything for themselves by only leaving small crumbs for others in order to buy them for their own ends, which is the root cause for the deterioration of ministerial values. Needless to give examples.

Where from this defect is being carried on is a question to probe the matter.

Not many are ready to take up the ministry in the Church for reasons well known to us. And for majority of these that are coming reasons are simply petty. Such is the stuff that is stocked in the Theological colleges for few years. If not the college really shapes them up, worse will be the situation in the church for that generation. Can the church blame the college or vise-versa? No, both are partners in what has been happening. How to rectify the situation? Only way left for us is to run the fast flow of new waters with enough antibiotics right from now so that there may be a visible change in a nearest future of a decade or so. Let me give a gist of what the ' New breed of Leadership ' is.

### New Breed of Leadership

Training in this kind of leadership cultivates in a minister.

- (1) Militant to eradicate the evil forces in and outside the church (Cleanse the house of God from becoming a den of thieves Mark 11:17).
- (2) Analytical perspective to be able to break up the issue for diagnosis.
- (3) Radical in terms of thought process.
- (4) Multivision but uni-directed action towards corporate well being.

- (5) Clarity of vision regarding procedures and targets.
- (6) Courages in initiation and implementation.
- (7) Uncompromising commitment to strike the bull.
- (8) And integrated personality as model for other.

This kind of leadership training is very much depending upon the following few factors in which the church and Theological College are like two wheels of a cart.

- (1) Selection of students by the Church—College joint committee for a deliberate and frank selection of candidates with right aptitude.
- (2) Training and exposure in sociological approach rather than in academics. This in no way belittles the conventional subjects but only shares an extra time and interest in developing social skills and cultural traits.
- (3) Constant re-orientation by the college for the ministers in batches of five and its multiple years of experience along with the participation of the staff representative to the presbyter's retreats and conferences at local level for updating the knowledge about the issues.
- (4) Churches attitude towards the Theological college is an important factor that contribute to the development of New Leadership. Following are the four areas of concern.
  - (a) Oneness feeling with the college on the part of the Church, in terms of constant interaction.
  - (b) Unbiased respect for the Church's needs and hurts on the part of the college.
  - (c) Free from the fear of mutual interference
  - (d) And Prerogatives of resources like money Personnel time and influence.

### END NOTES

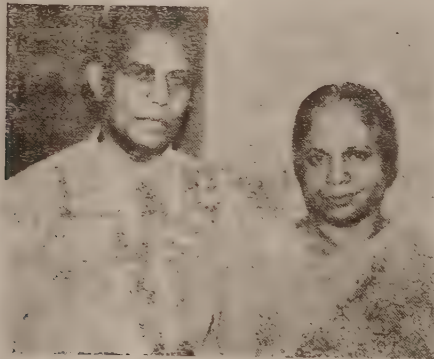
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(Democracy of God in which the loyalties of Christians are not to any person (even Jesus of Nazareth) but to people among whom God exists).
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# NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

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## EAST KERALA DIOCESE CELEBRATES THE FIRST DECENNIUM

It is with joy and gratitude that the East Kerala Diocese celebrated its first decennium on Sunday 4th of April 1993 at Melukavumattom. Moderator Dandin was the Chief Guest and several other prominent members have also been invited to the public meeting arranged in the afternoon. Rev. P. C. Dass Babu the Director of the Communications Department and Rev. Zachariah Koshy the Secretary of the Bible Society, Kerala Auxiliary, were also present.

The celebrations started with the Holy Communion administered in the Cathedral by both the Moderator and Bishop K. J. Samuel, which was attended by all the clergy of the diocese. The Moderator was the preacher who admonished the members to be alert and always be attentive to God's call for various ministries in the Church.

Though most of the areas are rural and mountainous and the people poor, engaged in small-scale farming and work in tea, rubber and cardamom estates, they generally crave for spiritual nourishment. Thus during the brief tenure of the diocese the number of churches in this area has gone up from 110 to 160, Pastorates from 24 to 42, Pastors from 19 to 54, Church workers from 24 to 45 and the Church membership from 30 thousand to 45 thousand. The increase in the Church membership has been mainly due to the pastoral care extended to many

people scattered over the new agricultural settlements in the High Ranges. Bishop K. J. Samuel is accepted as a charismatic leader and under his supervision the evangelistic work is being carried on with all the zeal and enthusiasm of reaching out the unreached people.

In the afternoon the Moderator was very emphatic in his address regarding Evangelism. Reminding the Kerala tradition of sending out missionaries, the Moderator said that the need for the Church to send more Evangelists even to other countries is far greater now than before. The Church, he said, should be alive to the situations and become an Evangelistic church, always willing to cope up with the demands of the day.

Rev. Isaac who had just completed 100 years was felicitated by the Moderator on the occasion.

### Bishop K. J. Samuel completes 25 years of service]

Bishop Samuel, young as he looks, completed the Silver Jubilee of his Ministry which coincided with the decennium of the diocese. Retracing his ministerial line, he gratefully acknowledges the evangelistic work done by him in the diocese of Dornakal (now Karimnagar) through the Parkal Mission was of great importance in his life. He praised God for the wonderful way that he has been guiding and counselling him providing all the opportunities required and, as a climax to his Ministry, made him the Bishop of the Diocese, which is a much more responsible position. He and his wife were also felicitated by the



Moderator and profusely garlanded by the pastors and lay leaders of the Diocese, Rev. Dass Babu was the speaker on the occasion. Rev. Daniel, the Treasurer and Mr. Isaac the Secretary were responsible for all the local arrangements. There was a fellowship meal arranged for all the pastors and important persons who attended the function. Rev. Sam Mathew, Rev. M. T. Tharian,

Rev. Samuel Thomas and several other leaders from Madhya Kerala Diocese were the special invitees.

The Moderator also laid the foundation stone for the construction of the Bishops House and chapel in the same compound.

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**Please Note :** On demand a Second Institute is arranged this year by

**Dr. A. A. HAQQ**

but the venue, dates and month differ.

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The final selection will be made by Dr. HAQQ. Free food and housing are offered for the duration of the Institute. Also, upto 80% of II Class Railway or Bus Travel will be paid. Send self-addressed long envelope (23x10 cms) with one rupee stamp affixed to obtain blank application forms from the Director of the Institute and return the completed application form with a passport size photo. The last date for receiving applications is 31st July 1993.

Sukha Nivas,  
3-6-238/1,  
Himayathnagar,  
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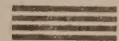
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